Who's Chess Piece Are You?

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Who's Chess Piece Are You?

by DanceOnMyGraveLikeThereIsNoTomorrow

Summary

An Au where Wil Graham retires after killing a man.
He's the Chesapeake ripper, but no one can know that. Well, someone can. Someone he hopes to reach.

Hannibal is interested in consulting on FBI cases as a psychiatrist.

Things go wrong really quickly.

Aka that where I make Will Graham into a mad serial killer.
Did I mention Wills an artist?

Notes

I have a few chapters of this prewritten I might as well post them all.

Not sure if I'll continue this.

Anyways enjoy

See the end of the work for more notes

Prologue; A Game of Chess

Hannibal and Alana reach the porch of a seemingly nice but a little run-down farmhouse by the outskirts of Wolf Trap. Snow sticks to his shoes and dark coat. Snowflakes lazily fall from the sky and slowly coat the landscape in a thick blanket of white. Alana knocks once more on the door and tried to look through the window.

„It looks like Will isn't home. I'll call Jack and inform him that we will try another time then.“

„Mr. Graham should be home, Jack told me he had called him beforehand.“

„And that is why Will isn't here. He would much rather go out and socialize than talk to the FBI again. And he hates socializing.“

Alana peaks again in the other window but shakes her head.

„What earned the FBI such disdain from Mr. Graham's side?“

„Will worked as a consultant, Jack pushed him to his limits. Jack refused to leave him alone since he quit. Even when Will voiced multiple times to leave him alone.“

„If Jack knows Will will refuse why to try again?“

„He saved more lives than anyone. But it destroyed him.“

Hannibal turns his head to the side, snow crutches just behind the corner of the house. Will Graham stands ankle-deep in the snow, curly hair pulled into a sleek ponytail with glasses on the bridge of his nose. A bag slung over one shoulder. Blue eyes stared with intensity at Hannibal.

„Alana. How many more times do I have to tell Jack to fuck off already.“

Alana sighs. A small smirk crosses Hannibal's lips but disappears rather quickly as Will gives him a sharp look of disdain. Something flashes across his eyes as he watches Hannibal.

„I'm sorry Will I don't like to bug you like this more than I have to. Jack send me with a request to ask you for help with a case.“

Will scoffs taking the glasses in between his fingers and sliding them atop his head. He passes the corner of the veranda and walks the steps up.

„My opinion on this matter won't change Alana. Tell Jack that if he sends you or any other FBI agent to my door *again,* I am filing a restraining order.“

„I'm sorry Will but-“

„I don't care, you know better than this. You can always refuse to come but no you do so anyways. This is the third time.“

Will turns his head to Hannibal arms crossed against his chest.

„And who are you? Another Jack's chess piece? Maybe even another agent for him to break apart for his own gain?“

Alana speaks up before Hannibal can.

„Will, this is Dr. Hannibal Lecter, another consultant on the case were working on.“

„Doctor in psychiatry?“

Will asks narrowing his eyes.

„Yes psychiatry and-“

Hannibal is cut off halfway by Will.

„Medical. You're a surgeon aren't you?“

Taken back Hannibal blinks.

„Yes... That's correct.“

Will walks past Alana opening the front door but turns to block the door frame.

„Jack knows better than send two psychiatrists after me. Once and for all, I refuse to get dragged back into his game. No, I will not consult on any case-“

„What if it was the Chesapeake Ripper?“

Silence. Will glares at Alana. He tugs off the leather gloves thinly covered in snow. His face is unreadable and Hannibal simply stays quiet.

„The ripper? After what? Two years?“

„Yes. We have a new case that fits perfectly in the profile you created. Sadistic mutation, missing organs or muscle, and almost theatrically arranged body.“

Will pinches the bridge of his nose sighing and running one hand through the loose curls on his head.

„Are you sure?“

„Yes.“

„Hand me the file I'll look it over and then decide. I'll call Jack later. Now, please go I have a client coming over soon and I would rather not have an FBI car by my house once she arrives.“

„Of course. Thank you, Will.“

Alana hands him a manila folder smiling.

„Have a good day Mr. Graham“

Hannibal nods him goodbye as he and Alana leave the veranda.

In the car, Hannibal finally asks.

„What does Mr. Graham do now that he quit the FBI?"

Alana smiles as she backs out of the parking space.

„He turned to the arts. A painter“

Hannibal hums watching the house slowly disappear in the car's mirror. White coats the roof and steps up to the patio. Just as they turn to the road he sees as Will opens the door to let a dog out. He stands in the doorway, winter coat off in a grey turtle neck. A white dog pushes past his legs and dives nose-first into the snow.

The trees obscure the reflection in the mirror and so Hannibal looks away.

What an interesting man.

Move The Pawn

Chapter Summary

The first murder scene and a cafe “meeting”

Will carefully drags a brush across the canvas. Crimson color stains it, paint drizzles down the canvas like droplets of rainfall. Will dries the brush in a cloth and dips it in black paint. Over a few hours, the sun drops over the horizon fading behind trees. Moon starts rising. Thick shadows and light mixes on the canvas making out clear dimensions of a skull stained with blood. Blue flowers spring and bloom around it. The bone is set in-between roots of pine.

Tired, Will leaves the brush to soak in a cup of water. He stands up from the small chair and takes the stars down. The living room is bathed in a gentle orange and blues of the evening. It would make beautiful scenery he thinks.

Raven circles his legs, she is a young white-furred Tamaskan dog. She's all that he has left of his pack. Apparently, while he got jailed in the Baltimore hospital for criminally insane for a few months, animal services had taken his dogs and given them away. Everyone presumed Will will be spending the rest of his days in that institute. Sometimes he thinks what it could have ended up like if he hasn't pleaded insane in that one murder charge. Fucking encephalitis.

He shakes his head to keep away those thoughts. He's not getting caught again.

In the kitchen, he makes himself a cup of coffee and sets it on the counter. On the windowsill lays the yellow Manila founder Alana has given him. He is intrigued by what have they gathered already about the Chesapeake Ripper. Or should he say himself? Will smiles as he cuts open the folder with a mail knife.

Hannibal wakes to a phone call. It's ringing rather loudly at an ungodly hour. Grunting he smacks his hand over the night table searching for it. He gets a hold of his phone and without a single look at the screen, he accepts the call.

„Hello?"

He slurs into the microphone. A voice filters through.

„Dr. Lecter we need you over on a scene."

„Jack? What time is it? Can I look it over in the morning?"

He groans in annoyance sliding a hand over his face. Now awake he squints at the phone screen. It is an ungodly hour. It's three in the morning.

„It would be better if you come now. I'll send over the coordinates."

Without a goodbye, Hannibal hangs up the call and sits up. The grey and dark blue sheets rustle beneath him. His phone pings once again with an address. Tired to the bone Hannibal swings his legs over the bed frame and gets dressed. Too tired to button up a suit he takes one of the dark blue turtle necks and takes the stairs down.

The house is dead quiet. He pulls on a coat and takes the keys to the car.

Baltimore roads are empty, street lamps give them a yellow hue, the house is dark, and alleyways are even darker. Fog drifts through the streets.

Within half an hour Hannibal arrives at the very edge of Baltimore, small house peaks through the mist. Police cars and yellow tape are already on the site. People from the Police force form a crowd behind the tape. Jak is leaning against one of the black FBI cars flipping through a file. Alana is nowhere to be seen.

Hannibal parks the car by all the others and gets out heading for Jack. His maroon eyes slid across the site. Tall lights are set up in a circle in a nearby field. The yellow tape is wrapped on the short fence that lines the area. Low but thick fog lingers near the ground. Snow covers the frozen ground and hides everything under a heavy blanket of white. Jack looks rather annoyed and a bit stressed.

„Jack. What is the situation?"

Hannibal asks, Jack looks up from the file to acknowledge him with a nod.

„Freddie Lounds got an anonymous message about a new Ripper murder. Miss Lounds being herself decided that the best idea would be to go to this scene, snap a couple of pictures and then call the police. We're certain that the Ripper contacted her personally."

„That indeed is a development."

„I would like you to look over the scene in a minute and give me your thoughts on it. The victim is a woman, unidentified, in her forties or thirties, brunette. Body mutilation is present, along with an abnormal lack of blood and missing muscle."

Hannibal nods as Jack lists off details of the scene.

„Could I take a look at it myself?"

„Maybe in half an hour or so. Will Graham agreed to help this once. Apparently just because it's the Ripper."

Jack scoffs and Hannibal raises an eyebrow. It's been a week already since he had been with Alana to Will Graham's house.

His eyes trail off to the police crowd. He pushes past a few men to get closer to the tape.

On the snow-covered field, just a few meters away lays the body illuminated by the lamps.

The woman is kneeling. Her wrists were tied together and raised above her head. In her palms lays what looks to be a silhouette of a bird, white feathers are either poked into it or sewed in. When he squints he can see the frozen blood covering her hands thickly. It's her heart that in her palms, just carefully sliced and mounted like paper into origami.

Two large pieces of wood are stuck into the ground and what looks like fishing lines are tied to them holding her arms up. She's naked, a dark hole is just beneath her shoulder. There should be her heart but the hole is empty. Blood has long frozen as it run down her chest. Long brown hair covers her bareback. Her face is dipped downwards so Hannibal cannot see her features.

Her thighs look, abnormal. The long cut spreads across the side of the leg and ends by the knee. There are stitches. The skin looks manipulated as if the was stretched over something that is not herself. The snow beneath her knees is colored with a deep red.

Just a few meters away from the body stands Will Graham. Unmoving and staring blankly forward. He blinks occasionally and his hot breath forms white clouds in the air. The ends of his fingers tremble with cold as his arms hang by his sides. Hannibal cocks his head to the side in confusion. What is Will Graham doing exactly?

In the exact moment, Will startles like a wild animal eyes wide and breaths uneven. Frantically he looks around. His eyes land directly on Hannibal. Politely Hannibal smiles and waves. Will only blinks, frowns, and turns away, his gaze lingering on the corpse. Hannibal looks over his shoulder at Jack, he's observing Hannibal closely with a cold stare.

Hannibal looks away and back to the corpse. Will is walking back to the crowd with long strides face unreadable once again. Hannibal holds the police up for him as he walks under it. In the corner of his vision, he sees Will smile before his lips drop back in an annoyed frown. He heads for Jack.

Hannibal simply holds up the tape and goes closer to the scene. Forensics trickle to the scene too. They take pictures and examine the body closely as Hannibal watches. Now closer to the body he notices the long clean cuts on both of the women's wrists. They are neatly stitched. Her skin is pale as snow. The Ripper had drained the blood from her while she was alive. It's not the blood that disturbs him the most. It's the thighs.

The skin looks stretched, and the muscle beneath is strange. It has the visual of a rough surface with spontaneous spikes and dips. Like it's not her muscle beneath the skin.

Hannibal circles the cadaver. On her back is a flower. A rosebud moss. It's stitched to her back. The rosebud is colored with blood over its originally white color. Hannibal can only stare at the scene.

It's was half-past five when Hannibal could *finally* leave the scene. It took some time to write down his thoughts on this case, review the already existing notes, update them, read it all

over again then give it to Jack only to be shoved a pile of paperwork to sign. Saying it was a horrid morning would be an understatement.

Hannibal sighed *yearning* for a cup of some *good* coffee. Not the black liquid that could be barely called editable what the police offered. Some nice cup of Macchiato would be delightful. As he walks to his car Hannibal can't help but notice Will Graham looming behind the police tape watching the forensics load the body in a black bag and zip it closed. A ting of shame washed over his tongue, they did get off on the wrong foot, and since they are going to work together now...

„Mr. Graham?"

Hannibal calls out stepping closer to Will's stiff figure.

„Yeah? Do I have another paper to sign?"

Will's voice is hoarse rough and utterly tired. As he turns away from the tape Hannibal finally sees the deep dark circles under the man's eyes.

„Oh, Doctor Lecter"

He sighs. Hannibal puts on a friendly smile.

„No, no more papers to sign. Mr. Graham, I was thinking of offering to invite you for a cup of coffee? We did get off the wrong foot and I am hoping to correct that"

Will stares at him. His tired eyes feel piercingly frightening. Like someone has driven an arrow through Hannibal's head.

„Is this another one of Jack's attempts to psychoanalyze me? I don't like being psychoanalyzed and you won't like me after psychoanalyzing me."

(Way too fucking much psychoanalyzing here)

„Oh no no no, I am only feeling guilty for my and Alana's ambush last week and simply want to make up for it. There is a nice café about fifteen minutes from here in Baltimore and I'm sure it will be opening about now."

Will puffs out a hot breath which forms a translucent cloud of air. It's slowly starting to snow again. Small snowflakes fall on top of Will's hair melting in his curls.

„If you psychoanalyze me I won't talktterly empty. Hannibal smiles to himself.

Hannibal orders a Macchiato and Will a strong expresso. They both take a seat in one of the primacy booths. Leaning back into the chair Hannibal sighs in satisfaction. Finally, he has peace quiet, and coffee.

„What brought you to the FBI Hannibal? Curiosity?"

Will speaks up, Hannibal simply rises his eyes up and bends over the glass table to take a sip out of the coffee. In the corner of his vision, he sees Will pouring a generous amount of a brown liquid into the coffee out of a silver flask.

„Jack reached out to me through Dr. Bloom, I do have a reputation as a psychiatrist and Jack was solely in need of insight. The consultations are simply a side job I took because of curiosity yes."

„Jack's gonna push you to your limits and drain you until there's nothing left of you. My advice is to leave now when you can. Sign no contracts and absolutely do not take a job offer from him"

„Seems like you have experience in this field with Jack Crawford I presume?"

Hannibal raises an eyebrow in question. He has been wondering what exactly went down between the two to cause such a reaction from Will.

„Too much. My life would be much better if I had not said experience."

„What happened between you and Jack that left such a distaste for him if you don't mind me asking?"

„Simple. Jack pushed me over my limit I got sick, killed a guy, got locked up, and then got out. I hoped to never return anywhere near Jack and his corpses. Apparently, I was wrong. Again"

„Why come back then?"

„This is the Chesapeake Ripper Hannibal. The more insight the better. He leaves no evidence, never had. He's precise, intelligent, a sadist, and ruthless. If they catch him, I need to be in the first lines to see him in handcuffs."

Will smiles watching Hannibal take another sip of the coffee.

„What is your opinion on the Chesapeake Ripper, doctor?"

Hannibal can sense Wills eyes burning a hole through the back of his skull. He looks up, Wills deep silver-blue eyes meet his own. Never once in his life would Hannibal think that someone can possess the color of Aegean blueberries frozen over with morning frost. It's stunning.

„Professional or personal?"

„Both"

Hannibal takes a deep breath eyes spiraling away from Wills's features.

„Professionally, I do agree with your opinion. He's intelligent, careful, and certainly a sadist. He's like no other serial killer I had read about before. I don't think you can call him a psychopath or anything else. He's simply the Chesapeake Ripper, a category of its own"

Hannibal takes a second to word his personal opinion on the Chesapeake Ripper. Some may call it rather unorthodox, or immoral. He is a serial killer, after all, he should not be praised or given any compliments for his "work". It may be an art form that society disapproves of, but as an artist himself, Hannibal had developed a certain taste.

This is murder. This is illegal and it is immoral. But it's beautiful in a way. It has meaning and weight to it that most people are too bigoted to see through the lens of disgust and bias of society. If one is to take off the glasses of morality and truly look at the murders, it is art. Just a unique and a different form of it.

„My personal opinion is that he has a certain reason to why and who he picks. This is no random victim choosing, it's deliberate. We're just too blind to see the technique. His presentation is a work of art, the careful arrangement of the cadavers indicates a certain fondness of the concept of death, or maybe life itself."

„Each body, each body part is like a piece of a sculpture. Carefully thought-through presentation and care are put into it. I myself admire him as others call it "theatrical" presentation. Each crime scene I walk through is like a painting. It has a story, a meaning. The Chesapeake Ripper is an artist."

As Hannibal looks up from the table he has been starting it the whole time as he talked his eyes linger on Will. The other man is smirking lightly. His lips were in a thin line and his eyes fixated on Hannibal.

„I must say that I do not condone his actions nor excuse them, he is a killer, I only simply state my opinion as an artist on this matter."

Will almost laughs grinning as he takes a swing out of his silver flask. It surely smells like whiskey.

„No need to explain yourself to me, Hannibal. I'm not going to run to Jack with a tape recorder and file a report. I am only interested in your opinion."

A breath of relief escapes Hannibal's lips. He is concerned about the sincere lack of morality Will possesses, but Hannibal definitely has no say in this matter. He lacks a particular sense of morality too.

„What is your personal opinion on the ripper, Will?"

Hannibal asks voice steady and eyes fixed on Wills blue eyes. The eyebags look too deep to be healthy or simply a single bad night's sleep.

„Mine? Well, I do agree with what you already said. He is an artist, he certainly has a motive we are yet to figure out and the crime scenes do really look like art. Each scene has a story and an ending, all of it is in the details."

„What do you think he does with the trophies? He took the majority of the thigh out of this victim. What can one do with a thigh?"

He has always wondered what the Ripper can do with the trophies. It could be organ trafficking, the black market, and dozens of other explanations. But not everyone makes sense. The trophies aren't consistent. Hearts are missing, loins, thighs, whole legs or arms, a damn hand got cut off once. What can a person do with a hand?

„He's eating them."

It clicks. Hannibal's eyes g impossible wide.

„So he kills when he needs meat?"

Will shakes his head.

„I don't think he necessarily eats only human meat, his crimes aren't impulsive or periodical like he runs out of food. It's simply to broader his taste. For curiosity and leisure"

„He kills, for curiosity?"

„In my opinion, yes. Maybe even to toy with us. Who wouldn't want to play cat and mouse with the FBI and keep on winning?"

A narcissist then. Because Hannibal certainly would not like to play cat and mouse with Jack Crawford, even out of fun.

„Interesting. This is a new point of view I encountered."

„What does Alana think?"

„She sticks to categorization. An intelligent psychopath, impulsive but careful. A sadist, possible childhood trauma and or ongoing one. She thinks he is venting through murder"

Will scoffs raising an eyebrow.

„I've heard that is the popular option in the psychiatric circles."

„Maybe. I don't agree with it, but I respect the insight it provides."

„You certainly are open-minded Hannibal"

Hannibal notices the fondness of the tone Will speaks with. He smiles slightly rubbing his thumb over the hot porcelain of the cup.

„I don't believe everything is black and white. Not everything has to have a reason, not everything has to have an explanation or a categorization."

„You are an interesting man Hannibal. Not so many people share your mindset these days."

„I have been called unusual by my colleagues in the psychiatric field for this opinion."

„In that case, we can be unusual together Dr. Lecter. A category of its own as you said"

Hannibal has to desperately pretend he does not hear the tenderness in Wills voice nor the feather-light brush of his fingertips over his hand. His assumptions are sealed when Will hands him his business card with his number when Hannibal drops him off in Wolf Trap.

Something warm spills over his chest when Will not so subtly runs his hand over his when handing off said business card.

End Notes

Thanks for reading!

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